

Nisa Today's

Company Details

Nisa-Today's is the UK's largest service and distribution organisation for independent food stores of all sizes. Every member organisation benefits from the collective buying power of the entire group, which Nisa-Today's is able to leverage when negotiating deals with suppliers. The Nisa-Today's distribution service – the most rivalled in the convenience sector – supplies its members with a wide selection of products in the ambient grocery, frozen food and chilled food sectors. Every week, its fleet of 300 vehicles delivers 2 million cases of products to 6,000 delivery points across the UK.

Location

- UK

Industry

- Distribution and retail (food)

Business Challenges

- Enable member organisations to compete more effectively against the large supermarket chains.
- Implement an IT infrastructure that supports a faster response to business change.
- Enable fast, streamlined exchange of data across old and new systems.

Solution Overview

- Nisa-Today's decided to replace the majority of its core systems and implement a new application platform.
- It engaged Enabler UK to implement the Retek software and integrate the different elements of the infrastructure.
- eGate Integrator is used to manage the transfer of data between applications and support the transition to the new architecture, in addition to handling the cross platform integration to Nisa's As400 based Warehousing and Distribution Systems.

"SeeBeyond has provided us with a standardised approach to transferring data between systems. As well as simplifying the whole internal support infrastructure, this helps our supply chain to function smoothly and gives us much better control over our entire business process." **Peter Walker**, senior systems development manager, Nisa-Today's.

Business Challenges

Nisa-Today's member organisations range from large independent supermarkets to smaller retail stores. As the big supermarket chains extend their influence and continue penetrating the convenience market, the independent sector relies increasingly on price, availability, product range and quality to remain competitive. Nisa-Today's provides support in all of these areas to ensure its members trade successfully in such a competitive market.

Historically, Nisa-Today's had a varied, highly bespoke and relatively inflexible IT infrastructure, which made a quick response to changing business conditions difficult, and employed a large support overhead. After reviewing many possible solutions, the preferred approach to this was to replace a large proportion of its core systems with several "best of breed" applications, ensuring the best tools for the job were employed in each area and providing the business with the optimum systems functionality.

"Our antiquated legacy systems running on a variety of different platforms, allowed very little flexibility, and gave us a large support overhead" said Peter Walker, senior systems development manager at Nisa-Today's. "For example, numerous duplicated islands of information had evolved in our business causing a large user overhead in terms of data entry and the functionality we could offer our members in terms of pricing and promotional strategies which was very restrictive for the trading led nature of our organisation."

Nisa-Today's wanted the new infrastructure to ensure fast, streamlined exchange of data between systems. Therefore it had to find the best way of linking the new applications with each other and with a range of older systems, many of which would ultimately be replaced.

Solution Overview

Nisa-Today's decided to implement a new application infrastructure based around the Retek Merchandising System (RMS). This system would be linked to a variety of other business applications, both old and new, including an online Order Capture System (OCS) developed specifically for Nisa-Today's by Enabler, and Nisa's several Warehousing and distribution systems. For the project to be manageable, rollout of the new systems had to be gradual with functionality maintained throughout.

Nisa-Today's engaged Enabler to implement the Retek system and integrate the different elements of the infrastructure. On the integration side, Enabler offered SeeBeyond's eGate Integrator as its preferred integration engine. According to Walker, SeeBeyond was the best option

because of its existing role in the Retek Integration Bus (RIB) and the cross platform interconnectivity it offered

"SeeBeyond was already a core element of the Retek Integration Bus, which we planned to use to link RMS with our remaining legacy applications," he explained. *"It therefore made sense to use SeeBeyond to address the integration requirements of the entire project."*

Either directly or indirectly as a component of RIB, eGate Integrator is now used to manage the transfer of data between applications at every stage of the procure-to-pay process. A variety of interfaces (eWays) have been developed to link these applications. As old systems are gradually phased out and new ones introduced, eGate Integrator will continue to provide the "glue" that binds systems together into a smoothly functioning whole.

Business Benefits

According to Walker, the ability to adopt a more flexible approach to pricing and promotions enables Nisa-Today's to enhance its existing services to members and continue to assist them to compete effectively in an ever-changing market. For example, Nisa-Today's can now set prices individually for more than 6,000 stores that belong to its members. It is also able to offer more extensive promotional offers to members who are willing to buy its goods in larger quantities and allows change to be implemented much quicker than before.

In addition, the ability to achieve seamless integration between systems helps Nisa-Today's to automate and optimise its supply chain processes. This enhances the group's existing services and allows even greater efficiency when working with suppliers.

Internally, Nisa-Today's benefits from a reduction in support requirements. This results not only from a more standardised architecture but also from the fact that all integration requirements are addressed using the same suite of products, with no need to invest effort in maintaining diverse and manual interfaces.

Plans for the future

Nisa-Today's has now completed the rollout of RMS and the new OCS solutions. It will also be implementing a new accounting system, and extending its existing SCManager warehouse management system to cover all its operations. SeeBeyond will continue to meet all integration needs both during and after the transition.

"SeeBeyond has provided us with a standardised approach to transferring data between systems. As well as simplifying the whole internal support infrastructure, this helps our supply chain to function smoothly and gives us much better control over, our entire supply chain" **Peter Walker**, senior systems development manager, Nisa-Today's.

Business Benefits

- The ability to follow a much more flexible approach to pricing and promotions helps members to be more competitive in the marketplace.
- Seamless integration between systems optimises supply chain processes.
- The use of a standardised approach to integration simplifies the internal support infrastructure.

Technology Profile

SeeBeyond Components

- eGate™ Integrator
- eWay™ adapters

Integrations

- Retek Merchandising System (RMS)
- Oracle-based order capture system / Member Portal (OCS)
- AquiTec SCManager Warehouse Management System
- Beacon Warehouse management system
- Geac System 21 Accounts system
- Internal Oracle CRM (Member and Supplier) Solutions Oracle-based data warehouse solution
- Kewill EDI Message Broker

Sizing

- 15,000 member orders a week, with 20 to 2,000 lines per order

Hardware

- RMS / OCS / SeeBeyond deployed on IBM pSeries p670 running AIX
- GEAC System 21 deployed on As400 platform running Os400Beacon WMS deployed on As400 platform running Os400
- ScManager WMS deployed on As400 platform running Os400
- Kewill EDI solution deployed on Intel Server running Win 2000 AS
- Oracle DW Solution deployed on Intel Server running Linux A.S 2.1
- Internal Oracle CRM (Member and Supplier) Solutions deployed on Intel Server running Linux A.S 2.1